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MR. NILES' PLAN

FOR THE

Construction of a Ship Canal

BETWEEN THE

ATLANTIC and PACIFIC OCEANS,

CENTRAL AMERICA.

NEW YORK:
METROPOLITAN JOB PRINTING AND ENGRAVING ESTABLISHMENT, 97 NASSAU ST
1868

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THE PANAMA SHIP CANAL.

[From The New York Herald.]

We lay before the public to-day a most interesting and practical scheme for the opening of a grand ship canal through the Isthmus of Panama, or some other point of Central America, to which we invite the attention of the American and all other governments. The plan recommends itself above all others hitherto brought to public notice, by the great principles of international justice and equality on which it is based, as well as by the adequacy of the means which are proposed for the completion of the work. It contemplates the opening, by the joint co-operation of all the nations of the world, of an ample channel for ship communication between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and securing it from all liability of ever falling into the hands of any one nation by giving to each nation a share, a common proprietary right, in the country through which it is to pass, as well as to its sovereignty—under the enactment of new international laws—in a word, to make the canal an open narrow sea, as little liable to interruption in principle and in fact, as the ocean itself. The schemes which have recently been attempted fail in these essential requirements. Every plan that does not embrace the principles of common international equality and justice will be defeated. Nor, indeed, can the means be found to execute the work without placing it on a basis so large, liberal and just, as to disarm the hostility of rival nations. With these remarks we recommend to the serious recommendation of our statesmen in power, and those who are to succeed, the well studied and clearly elaborated plan of Mr. Niles, com-

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tions of the canal, and that a majority of them shall at all times have power to change or modify such regulations.

20.—That the expenses of the commissioners, and persons employed by them, shall be paid by the government appointing them respectively, until the surveys are completed and the work entered upon; but that thereafter they are to be paid from the common fund.

21.—That the President of the United States propose to the maritime powers of the world, through simultaneous instructions to our diplomatic agents in foreign countries, to unite in the execution of the work.

22.—That the governments signifying their assent to the general outlines of this project be invited to empower their respective plenipotentiaries at —— to enter into negotiations for the conclusion of a joint convention to that effect with the United States.

Although the above propositions do not include all the stipulations, the introduction of which might be required in the proposed convention, yet the general scope of the undertaking, the means for its execution, as well as the mode of initiating and bringing about the prerequisite negotiations are, I flatter myself, sufficiently clear and explicit.

The present would seem to be an appropriate time for a candid and prompt consideration of the subject by the governments of Europe, as the prospect of carrying through an enterprize fraught with consequences so favorable to the rapid extension of Christian civilization throughout the Eastern hemisphere and the opening of so many new aud prolific sources of private wealth and general public prosperity would in no small degree serve to divert the excited and distempered popular mind of Europe from the pursuit of those visionary and impracticable political theories, so dangerous to the whole fabric of society, now so prevalent in this part of the world.

If, sir, in presenting this scheme I have stepped beyond the strict line of my diplomatic duties, I trust an ample apology will be found in the importance of the subject, to which the administration cannot be indifferent.

I have the honor to be, sir, with renewed expression of respectful consideration, your obedient servant,

NATHANIEL NILES.

Hon. JOHN M. CLAYTON, Secretary of State.

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